

Book Of Money

Saturday, December 7, 2002

Stock Market Traps

“Hope” and “More” and dangerous words.

There is no question I fell into the greed trap. And I didn't follow my “discipline.”

What was my discipline? To make small gains. \$100 per stock. Actually, I could make that \$130 to include commissions. Had I done that (or even come close) I would have been ahead. But my “discipline” collapsed before the possibility of making mucho money. And in truth, the stocks did sky rocket up. And I did make lots of money. But I held on, hoping for more.

The hope killed me. The stocks turned around, went down, and I ended up losing.

Result of all this commotion after three weeks of intensive stock market practice: I am about even. I'm back where I started from.

Well, I could say, at least my account is not in the negative; I'm not at a loss. That's at least something. And a few of my stop losses kicked in. So I did protect myself on the downside. That's at least something. I hope (there's that killer word again) I've learned something. We'll see. Only time will tell.

Meanwhile should I go back to my “discipline?” Is it a discipline in the first place? Well, only I can tell. It is, in any case, my discipline. What positives and negatives does it hold?

The negatives are I could sell myself out of a rally. Instead of making mucho money, I'd only make a little money (\$130 per stock, in fact.) The positives are: at least I'd make some money. It might also be more “peaceful,” meaning that, just as I have a stop-loss protection on the down side, I'd have a stop-gain “protection” on the upside.

Do I want such protection? Do I need such protection? Good questions, indeed.

Perhaps I could handle it by raising my stop-loss to the plus \$130 level. And then keep raising the stop if the stock goes higher. Then in a rising market I would gain more but if they started to fall, I would be stopped out.

This might be a good “compromise.” But always watch out. My key danger words are hope and more.

There is another plus. Imposing “stop-gains” would help engender serenity. I would at least “know my limits,” or at least impose my own limits. These limits, although at times frustrating, might help create inner peace.

Lower Expectations Bring More Inner Peace

Just like I accepted small tours, could I accept small gains? Certainly it lowers my expectations and thus can engender more inner peace.

But do I want inner peace? Or do I prefer the up-down, creative-destruction aspects of excitement?

What about exhilaration? Is there any exhilaration in accepting small gains? What could I be proud of? My self-control? My emotional management?

The self-satisfaction of competence?

Is there exhilaration in self-satisfaction?

Maybe.

Excitement has that up-down quality, elation and depression.

Exhilaration is somehow related to the quality of bliss, radiance, and the even power of inner peace.

Which do I prefer?

Getting Better At It

I am a gambler. Trading is one of my mediums. My total life style is another.

But so far I have not been financially good at it. Yes, I have survived; but not thrived.

I want to thrive.

Thus my goal is not to give it up. Rather, it is to get better at it.

Take Pride In Never Giving Up

My former stock market ventures have been a failure. Yet I would still like to be proud of myself.

Shouldn't I be ashamed of myself when I fail?

How can I be proud of myself after I have failed? Perhaps it is in the struggle to rise above my failure, in the refusing to give up quality, the drive to rise above my failure and succeed.

I can take pride in my fighting, never give up quality of my personality, that in spite of abject failures, I will never give up. Never, never, never! I may die fighting, but I will never give up.

I can also take stock market pride in the fact that I dared to take a chance, dared to try. Sure I ended up looking like a fool, but at least I had the guts to follow my heart and jump in.

I can also take pride in my ability to learn, to profit from the miserable lessons of life. I may have been naive, I may have been a fool, but upon learning that I have been one, I will not continue to be one. I shall learn, nay profit, from my mistakes and move on. Some day (not yet) I hope to even thank God for my mistakes! What a teacher He is! In fact, that some day is today. Thank you, God! Thank you for teaching me to embrace life, and take pride in my never-giving-up.

Yes I'm battered, bloody, and beaten. . . but I'm still standing! That is my fighting Irish. . . and Jewish quality. That is my bottom-line toughness, a quality I hesitate to publically or even privately admit. But no question I have it. Something to be proud of, indeed.

Yes folks, I've just begun to fight!

Tuesday, December 10, 2002

The "Joel-Father" Phenomenon

I bought too much Triquint. Why? After I spoke to Joel he mentioned he'd bought Triquint at 2.5 and made a killing (it was then at 6.) I thought, ah, Triquint is a good stock. It can't hurt me. I'll buy more of it. And I did. Until I bought too much of it; I bought "to the danger point." By the time it went down to my stop loss point, I'd lost mucho money.

What can I learn from this loss?

1. I bought too much Triquint after I spoke to Joel
2. I believed I was "protected" (by Joel) when he put in his good word about the stock, and how he'd made so much money by buying it when it was at 2.
3. Truth is, he didn't recommend it. I only interpreted that he did. I wanted to believe in Joel's omnipotence. I wanted to believe that his word, recommendation, whatever would protect me. How could he possibly hurt me? My father would never do such a thing. And if by accident, he did, why, he'd step in to cover the loss. I would never personally be hurt by him.

My father protected me.

I projected this protection onto Joel. How could he hurt me? After all, wasn't he my father in disguise? This realization is utterly amazing. All my original stock market thoughts, all my brain work, all my independence dissolved whenever I'd talk to Joel. The slightest hint that he liked or disliked some stock or market approach (like stop losses) would persuade or dissuade me. Any original brainwork or thoughts I had simply dissolved before him. In all fairness, he never asked for this. I am the one who created it. I am the one who created the Joel, Joel the Protector. And in the process, I lost mucho money.

Now I understand the projection of protection. Now I understand why I stuck with him for so many losing years. It is utterly amazing. My father, money, Joel: they are all so intimately connected.

But no longer. Thank God. I'm on my own now. Independent. I stand before my Fidelity account totally independent. I am ready to make my own mistakes, learn from them, take total responsibility. I may have some victories along the way too. I had a few weeks of victories but I blew it with the Triquint defeat. I'm, really pissed about it but what can I do? Too late to change the loss. I can only learn from it.

Thursday, December 12, 2002

"Relaxation Spot"

There is tremendous power in that deepest of (Alhambra) relaxation.

Practice softly (and slowly) to touch it.

This "relaxation spot" is an almost totally different place. I've touched it rarely in my life.

When you hit the relaxation spot and stay (dwell) there, you truly wake up!

The relaxation spot may be the "trading spot;" the place beyond greed and fear.

I am learning about trading – handling the emotions of greed and fear – through the guitar.

Fear of entering and being in the relaxation spot, and, once I am there, greed for staying in it, keep me out.

Where does greed fit into my guitar playing? What about fear?

Well, we certainly know about performance fear, judgement of others fear, etc. But what about greed? Since it is the opposite of fear, the other side of the coin, it must be present somewhere. Where?

In "over practice," in pushing too hard beyond my limit when I get it right; in doing it over and over again (especially after I get it right) until I manage to destroy it? (Thus does greed, by leading to destruction, turn into fear.)

Where does greed fit in? A good question, indeed.

Am I onto something here, or am I stretching a point?

Sunday, December 15, 2002

Making Creative Use of my Flaws

The Soloist by Mark Saltzman. Excellent! Boy, do I relate to this one.

Mark's cello teacher, Professor von Kempen, said as if reciting a prayer: "Every musician discovers that God has given him faulty equipment. That's where the difference between an ordinary musician and a great artist lies – how they face their shortcomings." Speaking in his archaic Bavarian accent and tapping his bow on my knee for emphasis: "The common man is shackled by them, Herr Sundheimer, but not the great artist! He finds creative ways to make use of his flaws, and thus he transcends them."

What a wonderful approach to negativity!

"Making creative use of my flaws." I love the phrase. Perhaps I could start with the stock market.

How much time and effort should I put into the stock market? How much of my life should it take up? Maybe I'm now putting its place into perspective. Instead of dominating my thoughts (as it has done during the past month. . .and even years) it might take its rightful five or at most ten percent.

This means, among other things, using a small amount of manageable money for it.

Of course, using a small amount of money means expecting small gains or small losses. With this diminishment in the scale of hope, will my interest in the market even be sustained?

Monday, December 16, 2002

One Hundred or Two Hundred? More on Defensive Thinking

How many copies of New Leaf Volume II should I make, one hundred or two hundred?

One hundred would be defensive thinking (my new stock market approach)

Two hundred would be more in the old inspirational method; it would show faith that I will sell them, belief that “my New Leaf stock” will go up.

Will it go up? Look at all the books sitting in the basement. Will I actually sell them? Or will my enthusiasm dribble away as my present small market is saturated? Am I being unrealistically optimistic by printing two hundred? Or is one hundred more “realistic?” Plus I can always print more if I need them.

Realism and smart point to one hundred. There is also the initiation of my new defensive thinking.

Unrealism, dreaming, hopes, and inspiration point to two hundred.

But does defensive thinking (one hundred books) mean an end to my dreams, hopes, and inspirational thinking? And once again I point out, I can always print more if I need them. Doesn't this latter sentence mean I can now, because of technological advances, combine both defensive (one hundred book) thinking and a touch of hope-dream-inspirational thinking.

I can see it does. Perhaps this kind of defensive thinking just takes some getting used to. I just don't believe it. . . yet.

Centered: Fun-Centered

The true rebel, the true courageous person, is he who allows himself fun in life despite all outside “restrictions,” despite those dire warnings of peril and gloom. He finds security in the insecure life. He embraces fun with his fingertips!

This means staying very centered: self-centered, inward- centered, in-room centered, fun centered. It requires an incredible amount of focus, concentration, and courage.

Fingertip fun focus and concentration is very difficult for me "in public." Something about it feels so "impolite." If I do it, I am not paying attention to the needs of others, not catering to their wants, not putting their desires above "selfish me." How dare I focus on self-centered fingertip fun when others demand notice? Isn't it my real job to take care of them? Don't their needs come first? Isn't providing for them instead of myself the correct social form, the "right" way to act in public?

Mother would have wanted it that way. In fact she demanded it. My only escape from that incessant but subtle command was to retreat into the artistic chamber of my mind, my "violin room" where I could privately experience the fingertip fun high. But over the years, the deadly poison of civility intruded itself into my mind. I ended up "believing" it, incorporating it into my own being. Slowly my thoughts became polluted, my fingertip fun high drifted backwards, repressed by the self-incorporating illusory demands of the outside mother world.

My struggle is to fight against internally created demons, to crush fire-breathing dragons trying to burn away my fingertips.

Friday, December 20, 2002

Acting in Opposition to Feelings: Reverse "Thinking"

Market Psychology and Personal Psychology

How much of the crowd is in me? How much do my personal feelings about the direction of stocks in particular and the market in general reflect the feelings of the general population, known as "the crowd?"

Right now I feel down and devastated by the market. I feel like giving up, selling everything, getting out. I am pessimistic and near the bottom. Does the crowd feel this way? And if it does, does that mean the market is at or near the bottom and it is time, not to sell out, but to buy?

This is, of course, completely contrary to my feelings. But the market, although it has nothing to do with my feelings, does reflect mass psychology, the feelings of the

crowd. Are these feelings also reflected in me? Do I feel them, too? If yes, are they a subtle “sign in reverse,” a deep inner signal to buy?

Does this, could this mean, deep within I have a “feeling” for the market flow, a “feeling” for the mass psychology of the crowd? Does one have this? Can one have this? Do I? If yes, I am reading myself completely “wrong.” Wanting to buy means it is time to sell; wanting to sell means it is time to buy.

What is the relationship of ecstasy and joy to greed?

Is trying to hold onto them an expression of greed?

Or are they greed in “refined form?”

I think they are not greed but stand by themselves. However, trying to keep them “beyond their time,” holding them after they have “run their course,” is greedy and thus involves greed.

Controlling Ecstasy, Fear, and Greed

The Practice of Ecstasy and Finger Tip Fun

The Practice of Fear and Greed, Too

On the Road to Self Confidence

The ecstasy of finger tip fun is so intense I cannot stay in it too long. Can one practice “staying in the fire?” Can I build up tolerance for this state?

Again, can I build up a tolerance for staying in the state of fear or greed in order to “understand” it, get a handle on it, and hopefully, get some control over it. . . if this is even or ever possible.

Are ecstasy (and fear and greed) beyond control? Is that their very nature? Is controlling them a contradiction? In other words, by controlling them, or having control over them, do you destroy them in the process?

Shouldn't you be “carried away” by ecstasy? Isn't it a godly state? If so, it's very nature would be beyond control. Am I making a mistake trying to control it, trying to

have some control over it? Or is this very path a dead end and an illusion?

Is losing control the nature of ecstasy and joy? Or, as in dancing, can one enjoy ecstasy and maintain a level of control. (As in the art experience: One must know the dance before one can experience ecstasy in it.)

Or is the question really: Do I want control over my own ecstasy and over myself? (Do I want control over my fear and greed, too? Or would I rather hand it over to others?)

I didn't spend over \$50,000 in therapy with McIsaacs to remain a slave. Thus obviously, at this point, the answer is: I want to maintain control over myself. This would mean control over my own ecstasy, and even over my own fear and greed.

Since I want control, then I need to practice staying in the ecstasy of finger tip fun. I also need to practice staying in fear and greed, so I can understand, control, and conquer them.

Perhaps ecstasy should be "conquered" as well.

Does this mean ecstasy is a state I want to control? Maybe.

Then this whole piece is about control. Self control. Doesn't self-control lead to self-confidence?

So maybe this is all about self-confidence in the guise of self-control. Control of these great forces: What a wonderful state to be in.

That's what I'm trying to do: Learn about, control, and conquer the biggies: ecstasy, fear, and greed.

I could even be in control of giving up control. How? Through a personal decision to relinquish it.

I haven't realized how important control is in my life. But hey, that's what the power struggle is all about. That's why part of me likes, nay, loves, politics. I am fascinated by the drama of the endless battle for control.

These so-called "outside" interests (outside myself). like politics, mass

psychology, and even the drift of the stock market, are actually be “inside” interests. They reflect my own psychological desires and needs. Thus by looking at my own desires, needs, ecstasies, fears, greed, etc., I will be better able to understand the so-called outside world.

Control, Control: How I Love It!

The question of what to do with my ecstasy has been a lifetime battle.

Privately, in my room, I want control of it. . . (I think).

But publically, up til now, I have wanted to hand it over to others. The “others” are probably the mothers of my life. Somehow they were in charge; somehow I put them in charge of my outside, beyond-the-artistic-chamber-of-my-imagination, world. But perhaps secretly I have always wanted control over my passions, and especially my ecstasy. Why not? It feels so good. Why not maintain and even lengthen it? Bliss, ecstasy, joy, simcha, they are all the same. The goal of yogic practice is to live in these states eternally. I believe in yoga; I believe in this goal. Only do I dare think that I could achieve it? Oh, yes, I can do it for a few moments, minutes, and maybe even hours, or, if I am extremely lucky, a day. But never for a long period; and certainly never for eternity. “You want eternity? What chutzpah! Shut up and go to your room. You little twerp, no one like you gets joy, ecstasy, bliss, eternity, whatever. The best you can hope for is communism. Shut up. Go to your room. Play your violin. And make sure to close the door.”

This kind of motherly attitude would definitely put a damper on public, outside-the-room displays of joy or ecstasy. But it wouldn't kill it—just quiet its public expression. The ecstasy stayed within.

What is this question of control? Mother or me? Well, both of these creations live in my mind. That is where I have to handle them. But although these phantoms affect my mind, I'm still making the decisions around here. And now I'm opting for control both inside and outside my room. How do you like that!

I have seen my four-year-old “running wild on the lawn” as my highest happiness.

The “wild” part means “uncontrolled,” running on the lawn. Thus I saw it – without mother’s constant gaze, reprimands, push-downs, and controlling nature – as my highest happiness. This was freedom.

By now I must reinterpret the “wild” word, and the meaning of “uncontrolled” in general. Now I see it didn’t mean no controls; rather it meant no controls from mother! But I could be in charge. . . of myself. No problem there. The “wild” referred to a wildness away from the iron lid of mother’s constant controlling.

Thus I did, and have always, personally and deep inside me, wanted control of my ecstasies, of my running wild, by running forever on my own personal lawn. Then ecstasy could and would be mine. . . always.

The old “wild” was really filled with fear! At any moment my happiness could be taken away by a commanding Ma word, a “Stop it!” or “Don’t be so silly,” or “Control yourself,” or “Don’t be so wild” or “Stop acting like that.” On and on. Lots of negativity. No wonder I retreated to build my own world.

But now I am an adult and past all this.

Sunday, December 22, 2002

(At this point) none of these tremolos are going to get better (through practice). So I might as well dive right in.

More slow and careful practice is simply not going to matter. I might as well play it fast, let it all out, let the ecstasy rip.

Is there a relationship between the “It doesn’t matter” school of tremolo-and-etc. guitar “practice” (guitar playing) and the acceptance and taking control of my ecstasy?

No doubt there is. Both are arriving in my brain at the same time.

This kind of “It doesn’t matter” guitar playing certainly frees up my ecstasy.

This is a wonderful attitude. It is also a truthful one. Now the question is: Will it last?

Monday, December 23, 2002

Trends

Is the public attitude reflected in me? Am I a barometer of that sentiment? What else can I believe but yes?

When the public attitude or sentiment is bullish, it means the trend has matured to “near the top”; it’s time to sell. When the public attitude or sentiment is bearish it means the trend has matured to “near the bottom” and it’s time to buy.

Are my personal sentiments reflections of the sentiments in the world around me? When I am enthusiastic, bullish, feeling up-sentiment about my stocks, they are usually near a top, so it’s time to sell. When I am feeling depressed, down, miserable, discouraged, bearish, down-sentiment about my stocks, they are usually near a bottom, so it’s time to buy.

In other words, public sentiments, attitudes, “feelings” are reflected in my private sentiments, attitudes, and feelings, which influence my belief in market direction. Up is down, down is up; depression means buy, elation means sell. Handling them means moving in direct opposition to my feelings.

No wonder stock market trading is such a difficult game.

This was exactly my mistake during last month’s bull run-up: I got enthusiastic and greedy at the top and didn’t sell (I even bought a little more Triquint).

Now it is the end of December and much of the market is down; folks are pessimistic, worried about the economy and war with Iraq; the public mood is cautious and somewhat scared.

Truth is, this is my mood as well: I too am cautious and somewhat scared. I am hesitant, even paralyzed with caution.

Isn’t this bordering on a good time to buy?

Although I have been wrong so many times, I like to believe I am learning. (The doubtful nature of this statement shows I am not sure, a lack of confidence born of being wrong so often in the past.)

Can I really believe in myself? This means, can I really believe that I'm actually learning something and will not repeat the mistakes of the past exactly? Dare I take a chance again? Dare I believe I am right?

The above may help me understand my own enthusiasms, joys, and ups, and my downs, depressions, miseries, and discouragements. It will help me know not only their meaning, but how to act on them.

Personal enthusiasms mean a down is coming; personal miseries and depression mean an up is coming. Private trends are reflected in public (and in the market); public trends are reflected in private (my business, bookings, checks in the mail, phone calls, etc.).

Can I remember these teachings, the difference between the power of present conscious feelings and the rising but unconscious power of upcoming opposites?

Another word for what I call "ecstasy" (or "greed") may be "over-stimulation." That's why when I "get it" I have to stop.

What is the relationship between ecstasy, greed, and over-stimulation? What are the variations and (subtle) differences between these energy flows?

And is there any relationship between this and my brand new right elbow pain?

Wednesday, December 25, 2002

Discovering Mr. Passionate Classical Guitar Player

In guitar it is the release of passion!

To release my deepest feelings through classical guitar playing has always been

my goal.

Can I relate this morning stiffness to last night's sadness? By taking the first steps into the garden of passionate classical guitar playing release, I am facing the years of traumatic classical guitar playing repression. With it, or course, go years of violin and classical music playing repression as well.

Imagine, me playing classical guitar with passion? It is almost unheard of. Putting the word "passion" together with classical guitar just has not ever happened. The thought itself has hardly ever come up. Amazing. Yet hidden away deep in the repressed closet of my mind is a passionate classical guitar player. I am in the process of discovering him. It could change my life.

Just thinking about passion and classical guitar playing makes me cry. Is such a possibility open for me? I tremble to think it is opening up now. "Classical" has always meant stiff, formal, even somewhat cold. Classical players wore suits when they performed, or ever worse, tuxedos! They never spoke to the audience. Passion and skill were expressed only through their instruments. They thrilled me forever.

But I could never play or perform like that. Worse, I could never even conceive of doing it. Totally beyond me and my wildest dreams. Yet I kept trying, practicing, secretly hoping some day even I would be able to express myself through my instrument with passion, some day I could perform like the great performing artists of my past, Heifitz, Ricci, Casals, Segovia, Bream, Sabinas. Following folk singers like Pete Seeger and company was easy. But the true gods lived in the heavens of classical music and classical playing. Folk singers might touch earthly passion, but classical players held the keys to celestial fire and heavenly passion.

My soul lived for fire and passion. It still does. To express such a combination of down-to-earth passion and heavenly fire through my classical guitar playing was just about unthinkable, something beyond my wildest dreams.

But now these mad dreams are on the border of coming true! What can I do but fall on my knees and thank the God within. For years He pushed me, drove me on,

forced me to practice daily and work to fulfill my deepest held, innermost dream. Now I recognize that God has descended into my soul in forms of ecstasy, passion, and fire. He has always been there. He is me. I am taking charge of my ecstasy, taking control of my passion, igniting the fires of my being.

Barriers have broken. Consumed in a whirlwind of classical guitar playing passion, I shout and dance in Alhambra madness.

I am, thus, at the border of daring to be that passionate person, that passionate classical guitar player I always dreamed about. No wonder my back hurts; no wonder my elbows, shoulders, and most of my body in fact, are in pain. I am facing the whirlwind of the trauma. I am about to run wild on my classical guitar playing lawn. Joy fills my heart. . . along with cold fear and its ice-stabbing knife.

I am opening the door to the fire of passion, and it stiffens my muscles and chills me to the bone.

White-hot ice and cold heat drift down the Rigid River stiff with flowing.

Thursday, December 26, 2002

Others tell me how much they like my guitar playing, my songs, my writings. Intellectually, I know they do. But deep down, viscerally, do I really believe my guitar playing and writing are helpful to others?

Perhaps the answer lies, once again, in taking control of my ecstasy. No question when others tell me how much they appreciate my playing, or what good things my writing reveals or does for them, I am profoundly moved. I feel incredible joy! What is this joy but ecstasy? Thus it is more a question of confidence, of believing what others tell me, and ultimately, believing in the goodness of my guitar playing, writing, and myself.

It is all about gaining confidence in my ecstasy, taking control of it, moving my confidence a step forward, embracing the love coming out of others, and accepting it as

a very deep part of myself.

Bass, Foundation, Fundamental

In "Alhambra," and other arpeggio works like it, all hope of good playing lies in the bass, in focusing on the bass.

All good work needs a firm foundation. The bass of Alhambra (and other arpeggio works) is the foundation. Thus it is fundamental.

Why did I deny the Alhambra foundation for all these years? Why did I not know the importance of the bass? The only reason I can think of is that I didn't want to know. I wanted to distinguish myself from Segovia. He emphasized the bass. Therefore, I wanted to be different; I wanted to show my individuality and uniqueness. This was, evidently, even more important than the bass.

As a result, I crippled my playing for years.

But I am over that now. My individuality as an artist is established. I have made my peace with Segovia. And thus, I am ready to play the bass.

Why this incredible understanding and breakthrough now?

On the other hand, isn't it about time?

Does it have something to do with playing Alhambra in front of Barry? Deciding to play, having the courage to play, in front of him was a form of taking control of my ecstasy.

What role, if any, does he play in this equation?

Or was I just ready to take control?

On the other hand, why was he there when I was ready? To mentally, emotionally, and spiritually, give a helping hand?

Probably.

Saturday, December 28, 2002

Diving into the Infinity of More

Suppose the “Alhambra” and all these arpeggio pieces were actually easy.
Suppose they were simple.

What would make them simple, easy? Why seeing the melody in the bass.
Totally and completely. Forget about the treble. Let it happen “by itself.”

Anybody can play the bass alone; anybody can make it sound. Even me.
Suppose part of my twenty-five-year problem has been technical. I was under the illusion that I should bring out the tremolo. I put myself under this illusion partly to prove myself, partly to differentiate myself from Segovia, and partly to give myself a lifetime goal: that is, play the arpeggios perfectly, play a beautiful “Alhambra.” With that goal, I would always have a place to find my “more;” I would never suffer from the “depression of success,” which, up to now, has signified arrival, a stopping point, and end to the adventure process of ever looking for more. An end to such a process would, to me, signify death. Who wants to die? Not I. Therefore, I constructed this “difficult arpeggio pattern” to constantly keep myself motivated, keep me going onwards and upwards into the stratosphere. Ever a goal ahead. Never arriving. Ever headed for the stars. An inspired and motivated life.

So I put the arpeggio “Alhambra” psychological block in front of me.

But that is no longer necessary. Now I see more is forever no matter what happens to my Alhambra. I am ready to drop the unable-to-play “Alhambra”-and-arpeggio pretense, to face and dive instead into the infinity of More.

In other words, my Alhambra-and-arpeggio block motivated me. Although born in trauma, it was, nevertheless, an energy source: it pushed me forward. Without it, I would die. That is, I invented this “Alhambra” block in order to fight against it. I created my own opposition. I wanted to build my muscles, expand, and grow. For this I needed an “enemy” to fight. I needed opposition in order to discover who I am. That’s why this process has taken so long.

Fine Tuning my Fan Clubs

I need a fan club. Everyone does.

What is a fan club? It consists of those supporters who think like me or at least like the way I think. They must also be active fans. This means they must be motivated to buy something. They must express what is in their hearts by spending their money on me, by supporting me financially, by buying my works.

Going public and advertising is the way to find my fan club.

My mailing lists are my fan clubs.

My job now is to fine tune them.

Sunday, December 29, 2002

I am too close to myself, too involved in myself to appreciate the importance of what I am doing. Most people are. It probably takes twenty years to gain perspective.

I sing Cu-Cu-Rru-Cu-Cu Paloma and break down crying as I touch its Beauty and Magnificence.

Doesn't this mean a recommitment, a rededication to the magnificent art of singing?

Has the time finally come? I think it has.

Monday, December 30, 2002

Narrow Vision Based on Expectations

So many things have happened to, and for, me during my life that I would never have expected. My limited vision and narrow perspective are all based on what I expected my life to be, how I expected it to turn out.

But I have to admit I really have no idea how things will turn out. . . ever. The only ideas I ever had were based on hopes and dreams.

God had different plans for me than I did. My narrow expectations limited my vision.

Know Thyself and how thy Mind Works

I sense this right elbow trouble has something to do with my guitar breakthrough. Right hand, right index finger, were the old forms of rebellion and resistance to competence. They have passed away. Perhaps my body is now resisting in a new way. . .through my elbows.

My elbows have never hurt before. But, of course, I have never played the guitar like this before. Breaking down old barriers hurts. Are elbow and guitar related?

There is also being born here a new competency on the computer. Of course, sitting mucho time at it can, and often does, create its own upper body pain. Still, there is something sinister and new in my upper body and mostly elbow pains. I can't pass it all off on spending too much time at the computer. From past history I know my mind works in mysterious ways. As well as supporting my imagination and personal bliss, it also struggles to resist and destroy me. The only way I can fight against these noxious, negative tendencies is through self- awareness: Know thyself and how thy mind works.

Is it Time to Leave the Market?

(I have Accomplished my "Artistic" Purpose)

Maybe the stock market is just not good for my health. Maybe it is bad for my physical (as well as mental) state. This is a totally new way of looking at the market.

1. I keep losing money in it.
2. When I make money, I get very excited. I then become "unrealistic," invest too much, and lose even more. So even when I "win," I lose.
3. What were my reasons for getting in the market in the first place? To support myself and gain financial security so I could become, be, and stay an artist. All these goals have been achieved.

Why, then, do I stay in the market? It only gives me heartache and unrealistic highs.

My New Leaves are ready. Wouldn't I be better off, make more money, and even have more peace of mind, if I spent "all" my time promoting them instead of losing money and worrying about the market?

Is this what the New Year, the "Year of the Great Show," is about?

My books are ready; my guitar is ready; I am ready. If it has proven to be historically bad for my financial, physical, mental, and even spiritual health, why stay in the market? If its "artistic" purpose has been achieved, why continue to waste my time and energies in it?

Anxiety Vaccine

I have been running away from performance anxiety for twenty-five years, probably longer.

Running away has ended. So has running. Now I now stand in place to heartily facing and accepting the maelstrom of the creative abyss and its curative effects.

That's a gigantic goal reached.

I wonder how this will effect everything else I do. One of my reasons for wanting to make lots of money in the stock market, and in general was partly to avoid this performance anxiety. Somehow, I thought if I were rich I would be "safe" from performance anxiety; I wouldn't have to go earn a living in the world by performing. Fear of the public censor turned my beloved art into "work." I certainly didn't want another profession; I wanted to stay in performing but also wanted to avoid alienated labor at all costs. What made performing feel like that? Its tinge of dread, the flow of fear.

But now I see that an injection of curative anxiety vaccine is a good thing.

Why? What does it inoculate me against?

Aches and pains. It forces me to rise above them.

Thursday, January 2, 2003

On the Up or Down Side: "Welcome" Performance Anxiety

Last night June Morse called. She and Tom are registering for our Budapest and Prague tour. That bring my numbers up to fourteen! What a wonderful beginning for the new year!

Success! Suddenly, that old overwhelmed feeling returned. Suppose too many people registered; I'd be engulfed by a flood of registrants. What a worry! Although it has never happened ever, it is nevertheless and believe it or not, an old fear.

What is it but a reverse form of performance anxiety? How will I handle my performance, how will I handle too many instead of how will I deal with a depressing desert of very few people. How, I ask, will I handle a flood?

But once again the positive energy aspect emerges. Numbers don't matter. The healing energies unleashed by performance anxiety are the same whether the numbers of my audience are too many or too few. Truth is, I get just as nervous for a performance before an audience of three as I do for three hundred.

So, whether it be over too many or too few, "welcome" the healing energies of the performance anxiety.

Friday, January 3, 2003

Pains of Computer Success

On one level, the trauma of success is worse than the trauma of failure.

At least with failure, you can try again. The aim-to-get-more process doesn't stop. But after success, where is there to go? You are left at the top with nothing to look forward to.

Success boxes you in. Failure gives you more freedom.

This is why it is so important to move your mind beyond success and failure, beyond attachment to the fruits to your labor to love of the labor itself.

No doubt, the pains I am feeling in my buttocks, elbows, and shoulders are

success pains, traumas from victorious computer studies, skills, and understanding. The final victory came when Frank installed DSL in our system. This was my reward for learning web design. I immediately downloaded Total Recorder, Fidelity Active Trader, and, using their discs, installed Photoshop Elements, and the Norton Anti-Virus program. More rewards for my web design labor, more gifts to myself for my newfound computer skills and understanding.

Success and rewards for it were everything.

Then, of course, came buttock, elbow, and shoulder pains. In fairness, I must say the elbow and some shoulder pains had been there in a small degree all along. Only I didn't pay much attention to them. Only after I admitted my success, and took rewards for it, did the new buttock pain arrive; then I suddenly had to pay attention.

But I was puzzled. Why suddenly buttocks? And why elbows as well? These were new areas of pain. I had never hurt there before. But Dr. Sarno says TMS (psychological tension pain) moves around. Once it can no longer "fool" you by locating itself in, say, your lower back, knee, etc., it then goes somewhere else.

Knowing my personality and history, the above seems right.

Saturday, January 4, 2003

On the Benefits of Self-Denial and Self-Deprivation

Self-denial, depriving myself: creates fiction which gives me energy.

Foods, deserts, etc.

Sunday, January 5, 2003

Questions of Joy Versus Suffering

A Physical Expression of the Old Neighborhood?

I have a new love – the computer.

But my new love is killing my body.

Which part is killing my body, the computer or the love?

The body part that is worst is my right elbow; this is followed slightly by my left; then comes my shoulders, right thumb and hypothenar region, some left hand, too.

And of course, my legs from the buttocks down. But that is slightly better today.

Do all these pains really come from sitting at the computer so long? I've been at it intently since I started web design lessons about two months ago. Then I intensified it even more over the Christmas vacation when Frank installed my DSL and I bought the Photoshop Element program, Norton Anti-Virus, and downloaded Total Recorder and Fidelity Active Trader. Truth is, computerwise, I'm really cooking. I'm proud, happy, and totally involved with my new computer skills. Also, on top of this, I got some more Budapest tour registrations which up my numbers to almost fifteen (best Budapest tour I've had in years), and all my stocks went up.

So, basically, businesswise and personal learningwise, things have gone from poor/fair to wonderful/absolutely wonderful.

What do I have to complain about? My body parts. Why are they killing me?

Is it the joy of victory? Can I stand so many successes in a row? Have I repressed my "wahoos!" and pushed the rushing energies into, among other places, my right elbow?

I really can see no other explanation.

Somehow I can't believe that sitting so long at the computer can, and really does hurt my body so much. Annoy me, yes, but destroy my body parts? That's a bit too much. Plus, I was doing fine a week ago. Why now? Why suddenly now?

It all started in earnest after that long, frustrating day when Frank installed DSL. But what lay under the frustration, expense, and overwhelmed feeling of now having three, nay, four, new computer programs to learn? Why, it was happiness, of course. Actually, a deep part hated to admit that I was joyful at being overwhelmed.

This is definitely the new me. The old me focused on the overwhelmed part; the new me sees the joy.

The only deep down explanation for my body's aches and pains that I can find,

see, truly believe, has something to do with joy. The joy of victory, learning, new discovery, new expansions and directions.

I can find absolutely no reason to be miserable in the old way.

Yet my body parts do ache. Could they “simply” be remnants of the old neighborhood?

Hard to believe. But possible nevertheless.

Thursday, January 9, 2003

Passion Resistors: Gates of Strength

See pains as passion resistors.

They are also gateways.

Suffering and joy as opposites sides of the passion coin.

By focusing on passion resistors, seeing them as tough bundles of energy, sources of power, gates to inner strength, you can walk right through them.

Passion resistors create fear, hesitation, caution. They put the brakes on unbridled enthusiasm. As such they can act as safety barriers on the wild, roller coaster, up-down joy rides.

In terms of stocks: passion resistors are the fears that brake the wild, over-enthusiastic joy rides of greed.

Monday, January 13, 2003

Sadness as a Source of Creative Power

Things have been going very well the past few days. I've been feeling first euphoric, then moving from glowing to calm to even.

I have basically had no desire to do anything. . .but luxuriate and experience the “calm euphoria” of success.

But now, among all this goodness, a strange thing is happening: I miss my

sadness. I want to be sad.

My sadness, downs, and depressions are one of the sources of my creative power.

So ends a New Leaf.